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ROMAN LETTER

The commemoration of the tri-centenary of Gianlorenzo Bernini, the Neapolitan sculptor and architect who flourished nearly to the close of the seventeenth century, took place on the 8th of December. The official ceremonies consisted in the placing of a crown on the tomb of Bernini in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, the setting of a commemorative tablet upon the façade of the house in Via della Mercede, where Bernini lived and died, and by the greater ceremony in the hall of the Orazi and Curazi of the Capitol, the participating of the sindaco of Rome, a large part of the giunta, the ambassadors of France, Spain and England, Princes Doria-Pamphili, Chigi, Rospigliosi and Barberini, Count Andriozzi, descendant of Bernini, notables and representatives of the foreign academies at Rome and of many centers in Europe and Italy, and many artists, native and foreign, resident in the city. At this ceremony a bust of Bernini by the sculptor Guglielmi was unveiled, and a discourse delivered on the life and work of Bernini by the learned and eloquent Carrado Ricci, was received with enthusiastic ovation. The fountain of Piazza Navona, one of Bernini's best works, was in the evening illuminated at the city's expense, and in the piazza a regimental band concert was held.

The commemorative tablet mentioned above was executed under the direction of the distinguished and genial Roman sculptor, Ettore Ferrari, and is a faithful copy of one executed by Bernini himself in the ancient church of St. Prassede, with the sole exception that an admirable marble portrait head of Bernini has been substituted for the cherub of the original work.

On the evening of the 10th an enormous and elegant company was united at the International Artists' Club for a festival which the club gave in honor of Bernini. Professor Venturi, the profound historian of art, spoke in honor of the memory and art of Bernini. The young pianist Tosi executed admirably the music of Schumann, the baritone Caruson sang a romance of Cotogni and one of Tosti, accompanied upon the piano by the great Mascagni, now at Rome directing the first performance of his new opera, "Iris;" the Signora Darclée sang the Habanera of "Carmen," and a graceful romance by Mascagni, "M'ama, non m'ama," and Mascagni played the Intermezzi of the "Cavalleria Rusticana," and of "Ratcliff." As you see a real festival of art.

J. S. C.

Rome, Dec. 12, 1898.